

1750 S. Telegraph Rd., Suite 101 Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302



**Stephanie B. Milstein, Ph.D. (248) 451-9085 x25**

September 6, 2011

To: Laura & Families Empowered and Supporting Treatment of Eating Disorders (F.E.A.S.T.)

Re: Letter of Endorsement for the "The Map Ahead: F.E.A.S.T. Symposium 2011"

I am writing this letter in support of F.E.A.S.T. and the Organization's upcoming conference, entitled "The Map Ahead". The conference is and it is being spearheaded by a community of parents that have continuously worked on educating, supporting and empowering other parents and family members as they embark and proceed on their family's journey of recovery. I am honored to be collaboratively working with this team on the planning committee.

This will be the F.E.A.S.T.'s first conference and will also be the first time that many parents will be meeting in person after many weeks, months or even years of supporting one another through emails, cyber communication and/or phone contacts. It is an honor and privilege to serve on this organization's Professional Advisory Panel, and I have witnessed, firsthand, the power of parent -to -parent coaching and support with many of the families that I have worked with in my own clinical practice. Additionally, I have received positive feedback directly from online moderators and mentors who I have met at International conferences.

This conference is beneficial for parents and family members at all stages of treatment and the recovery process. Attendees will leave equipped with the skills to make a difference in their family's lives, their community, in policy, research and for the general public. The number one barrier to effective treatment that patients and families experience is stigma. Although eating disorders are potentially lethal illnesses, they are also very treatable. There is evidence-based treatment available but, too often not for everyone, due to limited providers and oftentimes, funds. Research continues to demonstrate that the best prognosis for recovery is associated with early detection and intervention, utilization of a comprehensive treatment team of specialized treatment providers that have been trained in evidence-based treatment, continuum of care and gradually stepped down treatment, full weight and nutritional restoration and family involvement in the ongoing treatment and recovery process. Family is absolutely key to ongoing health and recovery. Therefore, the need for parent support, education and collaboration is critical. Many parents and families are isolated without access to qualified treatment providers and have benefitted from cyber support. F.E.A.S.T. also has served as a means of sharing information, resources and knowledge.

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It has been my professional experience that when parents/family members are informed about the illness they are combating, they are more willing and effective advocates in promoting change while supporting their loved ones. Misinformation and stigma surrounding eating disorders disables family units and leads to a perpetual pattern of anger, blame, resentment, destruction of the family unit and is a leading barrier in treatment. Family Based Treatment (FBT) seeks to engage the full family in the treatment process since the family members are the best resource for treatment and helping the sufferer. Treatment also supports the families in attaining family healing with recovery. Nobody can overcome an illness as horrific as an eating disorder alone and nobody should have to. Families do not cause eating disorders; however, they are an essential component of effective treatment and recovery. Through educating parents, we are able to aid them in advocating on their child's and family's behalf for insurance coverage, ongoing care, treatment and much needed accommodations at school, therefore, potentially preventing recidivism and unnecessary prolonged suffering.

I have a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and I specialize in the treatment of eating disorders and mood disorders. I work with children, adolescents, young adults and family. I utilize evidence-based treatments including: Family Based Treatment (FBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). I run a private clinical practice and, additionally, facilitate parent coaching and adolescent skills groups at the Hough Center for Eating Disorders through Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan. I have been a presenter at the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) International Conference for the past five years. I also worked with the Joseph J. Laurencelle Memorial Foundation (JJLMF) on erasing the stigma associated with mental illness. I am most passionate about continuously working on eliminating the stigma that too often creates the barrier to successful treatment of eating disorders. I am enthusiastic about the countless opportunities that this conference will offer so many family members and loved ones. This conference offers participants to come and learn from one another; to become a part of a community of learners and to then become ambassadors of teaching and sharing in the own communities.

Sincerely,

Stephanie B. Milstein, Ph.D.  
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F.E.A.S.T. Professional Advisory Panel Member

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